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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, March 11, 1942

SUBJECT: "Vegetables in 1942". Information from Triple-A officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Once again here is more information from the United States Department of Agriculture on food supplies during 1942. And today the information is about the supply of canned vegetables.

The demand for canned vegetables will be much greater this year than it's ever been before. But to offset that demand the Department of Agriculture has made plans for a record pack of canned vegetables. In addition, it is putting special emphasis on farm, community and school gardens.

Let's take a look at this canning vegetable program.

The production goals for canned vegetables are pretty big. 40 million cases of canned tomatoes.....38 million cases of canned peas....24 million cases of canned corn.....And 12 and a half million cases of canned green beans.

Now compare these goals with last year's canning output. Here's what you'll find.

The goal for canned corn is smaller than last year's pack. And the goal for canned green beans is about the same as last year. So, nobody needs to worry much over green beans and corn. In fact, Department of Agriculture officials are confident the canning industry will take care of these two vegetables without special help.

But the picture is different for tomatoes and peas. It's going to be quite a job to meet production goals for these vegetables, because, for every 4 cans of tomatoes packed last year, canners are asked to pack 5 cans this year. And for every 3 cans of peas packed last year, they're asked to pack 4 cans this year.

You can see that's quite an increase. It won't be easy, but Department officials are confident that commercial vegetable growers will be able to raise enough vegetables. Of course, after that comes the job of canning them. This will require that all available canning facilities be operated at capacity during the 1942 season. The Department of Agriculture has set up a canning vegetable program to help with the job.

Here's what it includes.

The Department will buy canned tomatoes and peas offered by canneries certified by a State USDA War Board. This purchasing program is to increase production and assure consumers of a plentiful supply of canned vegetables. The program has already established a set price, a price that will be fair to both canners and consumers.

Now, to be certified by a State USDA War Board, a canner needs to do only two things. First, he must make contracts with growers that provide a minimum fair price to the grower. Second, he must contract enough tomatoes or peas to operate his cannery at capacity.

Through this program Department of Agriculture officials expect to reach the goals for canned vegetables. And it's mighty important that they do.

Tomatoes get first place. If factory workers in the United States produce all those tanks, planes and battleships the President has asked for, they'll need to eat a lot of tomatoes for strength. Our armed forces need canned tomatoes in large quantities. Canned tomatoes are a convenient food for vitamin C to use in field operations. Canned tomatoes are especially important for our expeditionary forces.

People in other United Nations also need canned tomatoes to carry on their war work. England has already received several million cases through Lend-Lease shipments. In fact, the major part of the 5 million cases of canned tomatoes purchased by the Department of Agriculture during the last year, has already gone to England.

Well, that's how the canned vegetables will be used. But two more problems confront vegetable canners. The canners need labor, and they need tin.

Canning is a seasonable job, most of it done during the summer, so young men and women who attend school during the school-year can do much of the work. Many young people have been asking what they can do to help their country in its war effort. If there's a canning factory in the community, that's one answer to the question. It's going to be mighty patriotic to work in a canning factory this summer.

Now...the supply of tin. The Department of Agriculture has been promised that there'll be enough tin to pack these vegetables needed for war. But that doesn't mean that a single can can go to waste. Many people will be able to buy fresh vegetables during the fresh vegetable season, and thereby save the canned vegetables for the boys in uniform.

That's one of the reasons for the special farm garden program this year. The country needs 30 percent more farm gardens than last year. It needs more than 5 and a half million farm gardens. By raising their own vegetables, farm families can release, for our armed forces and allies, the canned vegetables they'd normally buy. However, Department officials recommend that city people, who are not experienced in gardening, or who do not have good soil and plenty of sun, should not go into gardening.

Well...,all in all, the picture is this: If every farm family has its own garden, if people use fresh vegetables as much as possible, and if canners get the necessary labor for their vegetable packs this year, there'll be plenty of vegetables for civilians in this country, for our armed forces, and for our allies.

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